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ABSTRACT

The insights of developmental psychology have rarely been applied to the business setting. This paper sketches one large-scale attempt to do just that in the development of managers in a large, multicompanied, international service corporation. This paper recounts the initial efforts to plan, implement, and evaluate a three-year longitudinal program of personal and organizational development and to present data and tentative conclusions about the effectiveness of the program two years after its inception. The main feature of this program is the concept of developmental need. After careful assessment, a list of developmental needs is prepared for each manager involved in the program. The goal is to have these need statements serve as a prescription for an individualized management development program. The management program consists of four states of developmental programming. The criterion for change or development is the degree to which managers close their development gap as deisgnated by their developmental needs. Partially tabulated results after two years suggest that the program is effecting positive change. Whereas this is a report of the first phase of the longitudinal project, additional materials concerning the project will not be available for at least three years. (Author)

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APPLYING SOME INSIGHTS OF DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY TO MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT[1]

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Introduction

The insights of developmental psychology have rarely been applied to the business setting. This paper sketches one rather large scale attempt to do just that in the development of managers in a large, multi-companied, international service corporation. This paper recounts the initial efforts to plan, implement and evaluate a longitudinal program of personal and organizational development and to present data and tentative conclusions about the effectiveness of the program two years after its inception.

The question: "What ability do managers need more than anything else?" has been asked over and over again of countless managers and supervisory personnel on numerous questionnaires. The answer has consistently been that managers need to be able to get along with people. In other words, most managers recognize that "people problems" are more important than technical problems. And since most managers have sufficient technical training and experience--many possess master's degrees--but have little or no formal training in dealing with people's problems and developing their potential, this training

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program was instituted. It has two objectives:

1. to train managers in the skills of developmental counseling; and
2. to assist managers in a program of self-development which serves as a catalyst for personal and organizational growth.

This program is based on the assumption that managers are in the people business, and that their prime responsibility is to develop the people under their charge. This development includes increased production capability, loyalty to the organization, job satisfaction, and career fulfillment. To develop his employees, the effective manager needs competence in these areas: technical expertise, the conceptual skills of management (planning, coordinating, controlling, etc.) and the interpersonal. The program also assumes that the manager is capable of changing, and that if the corporation expects its managers to change and develop, the managers will, by and large, meet such expectations. The last assumption, and perhaps the most important, is that both the individual manager and the corporation must be responsible and accountable for their respective role and outcome of the management development program.

Incorporating the developmental counseling framework of Blocher (1966, 1974) and the organizational development model of Bennis (1969) and Schein (1969), plus the notion of cognitive style (Witkin, 1966), this program requires that all managers be evaluated by the "Management Potential Assessment", an individually administered battery of personality, intelligence, management, etc. tests and interview-simulations. The main feature of this report is the list of <u>developmental needs</u> which are generated, which serve as a prescription for an individualized management development program.

A series of four stages of developmental programming are planned to span a three and one-half to four year period. Much of the programming involves small group seminars, others involve self-study and one-to-one consultation. The four stage program is as follows:

Stage One: The assessment of developmental needs. Didactic and experiential group training in the conceptual skills of management, and an introduction to interpersonal relations.

Stage Two: Further developmlent of conceptual skills. Heavy emphasis placed on developing counseling skills: reading behavior; attending behavior; appropriate responding behavior; action techniques; crisis intervention; and referral. Emphasis is placed on the role expectation and situational factors in organizational counseling. Sperry and Hess, Contact Counseling: Techniques for Developing People in Organizations (Addison-Wesley, 1974) and Sperry, Developing Skills in Contact Counseling: A Workbook (Addison-Wesley, 1975) are basic resources.

Stage Three: Developing a plan and contract for personal development. Further testing and assessment of change. Skills of time management, dealing with executive stress, etc. More conceptual skills. Training in career growth planning and job enrichment. Initiation of personal and organizational development in one's area.

Stage Four: Further work on meeting developmental needs. A total reassessment of management potential. More directed effort at developing the people and organizational climate of the people under the manager's charge.

All throughout this program, the manager and the corporation are accountable to each other through the medium of Performance Standards, which are evaluated and revised, if necessary, every six months. The performance standards serve as contract between the manager and his boss, as to what is expected of the manager and the boss.

Subjects

All available managers in the twenty some companies which form the American

Appraisal Associates, Inc. who wished to participate were subjects in this program. Ages ranged from 22 to 62 years of age, and spanned the spectrum from first line supervisor to chief executive officer of the holding company. There were six women and four Blacks. Most had college degrees, and approximately 30% held master's degrees or other professional designation. N=192

Procedure

All managers either had or undertook the Management Potential Assessment which was used to generate a list of developmental needs. All managers completed the first stage of the program, which started in September, 1972. At this point about 20% have completed the second stage, and about 5% are engaged in the third stage. Managers are scheduled to the stages based on a number of considerations, but an effort is made to cross company lines and layers of management when seminar activities are planned.

A number of formal instruments are used to collect data. They are: Leader Adaptability and Style Inventory; Wechsler Adult Intelligence Test; Survey of Personal Values; Styles of Learning Inventory; Personality Styles Inventory; Life Style Orientation Questionnaire; Organization Structure Questionnaire; Job Reaction Survey; Response Style Inventory; Rotter Incomplete Sentence Blank; Thematic Apperception Test; and the Glaser Personality Inventory. Measures are also used to assess organizational climate and growth. These include: Organalysis and Organization Renewal Inventory. Data is also being collected on such non-reactive measures as days absent; number of sick days taken; performance standards; etc.

Plan for Reporting Results

The purpose of this longitudinal study is to test whether this four stage management development program will result in greater personal development in the managers involved in the program (as measured by the degree to which they close their developmental gaps as measured by the Management Potential Assessment); and to what extent the manager can function as an effective counselor (as measured on the Rating Scale of Counselor Effectiveness (Ivey, 1971). The quasi-experimental design selected for this study is the "time lagged control" design with N=1 (see Glass, Willson & Gottman, 1973). Obviously, no control group is used with this quasi-experimental design. When the project is completed overall changes in organizational climate, profit margins, and job satisfaction will be measured and analyzed with standard inferential statistics and a pre-post test design. Results tabulated so far indicate that developmental gaps are being closed by those managers who have been involved in the third phase for at least two months.

Conclusions

This paper reports on an on-going longitudinal study in its second year of a management development program based on developmental psychology and counseling. The criterion for change is the degree to which managers close their developmental gap as indicated in terms of their Management Potential Assessment. Secondly, this study intends to examine what effects teaching managers counseling skills has on their job performance. Partially tabulated results suggest that the program is effecting positive changes.